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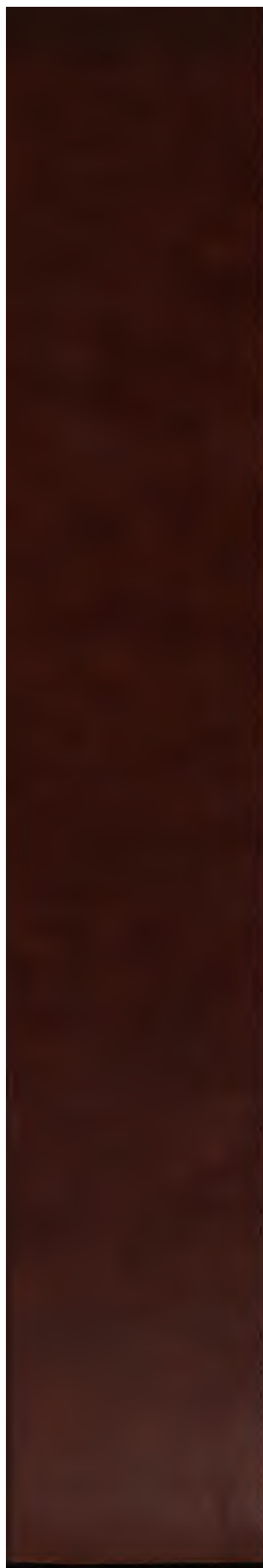
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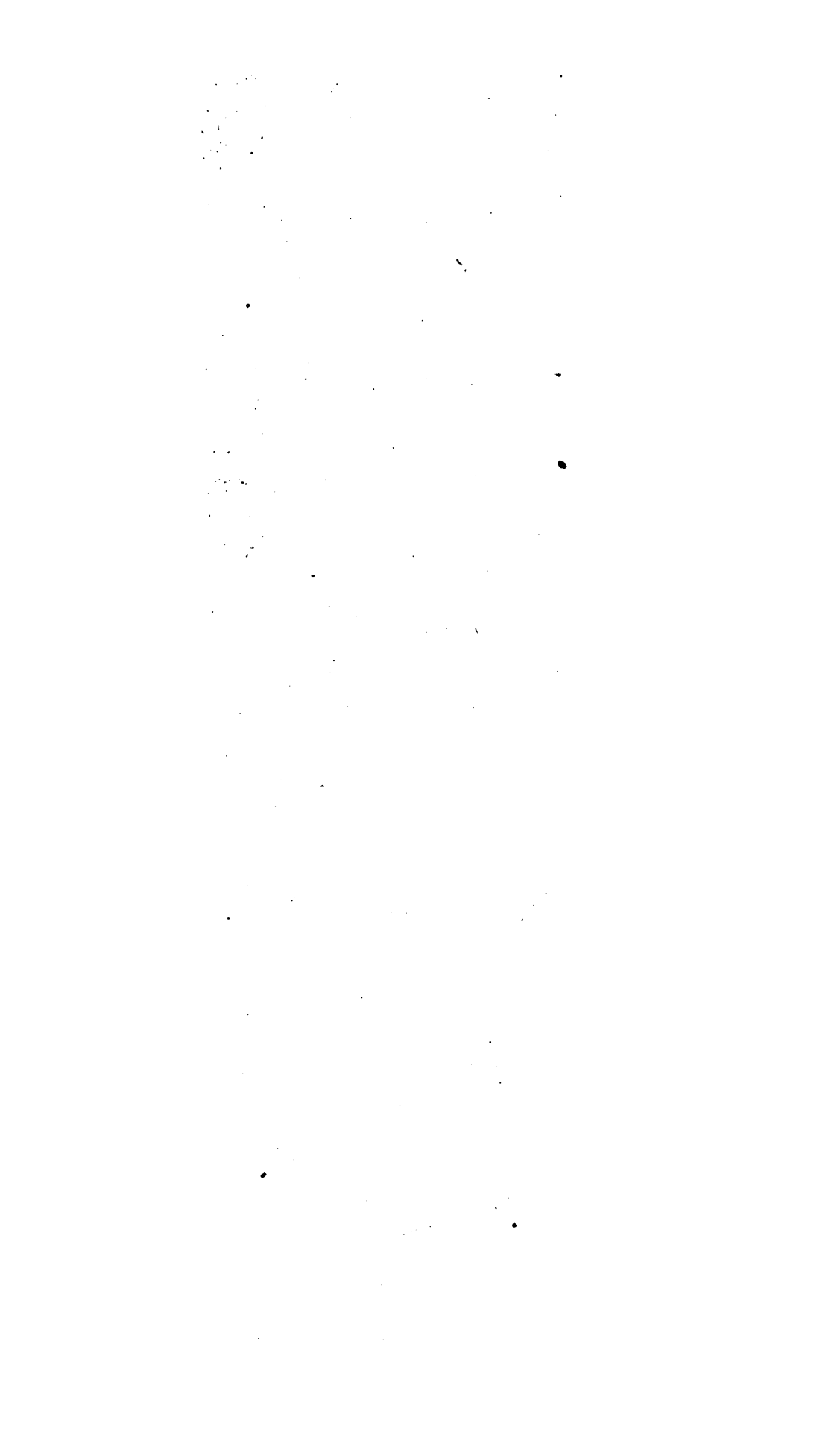
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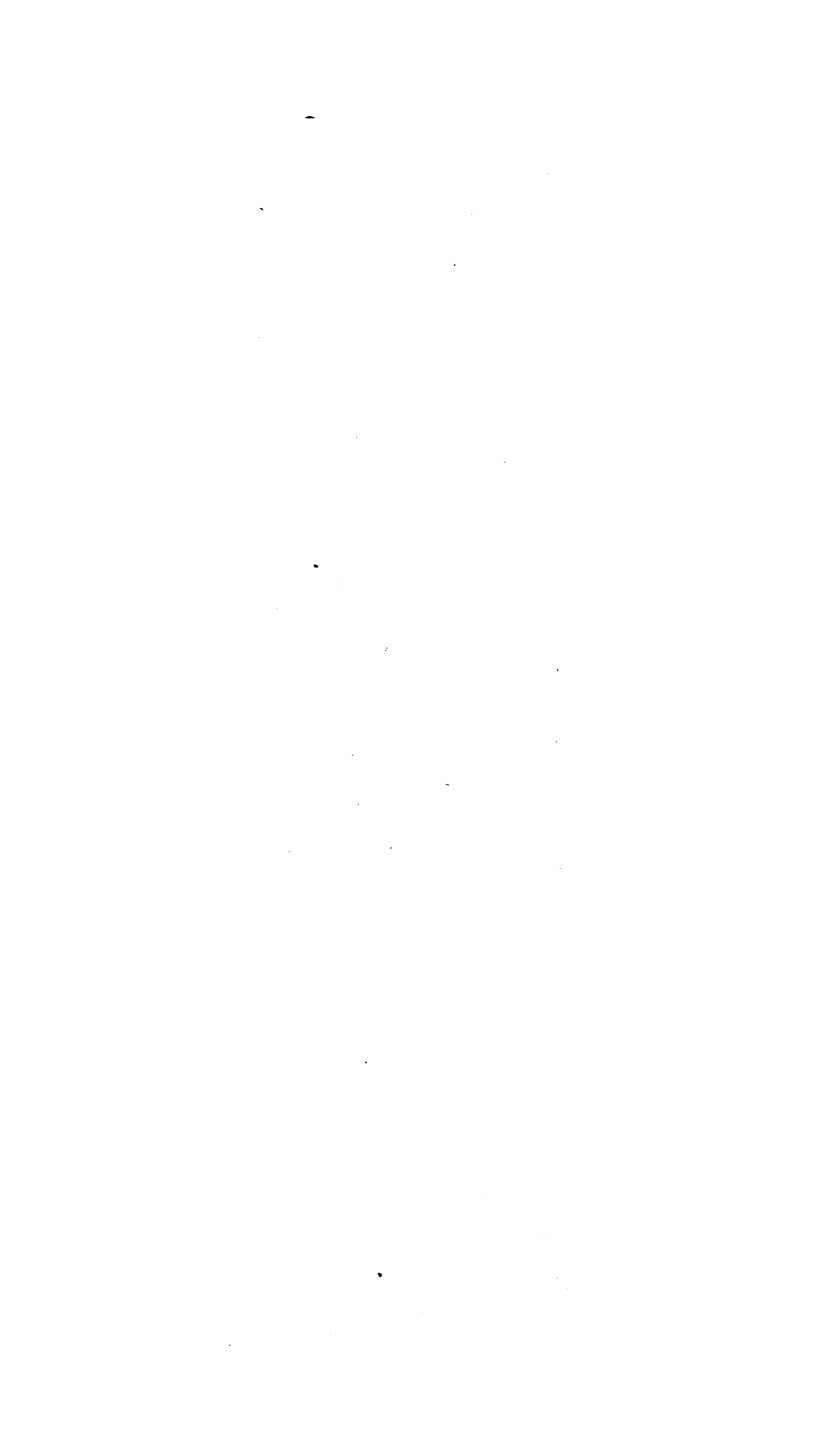
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Edward J. Lowell.



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July 6, 1933

MEMOIR.

EDWARD JACKSON LOWELL, son of Francis Cabot Lowell and Mary daughter of Samuel P. Gardner, was born in Boston on October 18, 1845. His paternal grandfather, also named Francis Cabot Lowell, graduated from Harvard College in 1793, and was one of the founders of cotton manufactures in this country. In connection with his brother-in-law Patrick T. Jackson, he established the Boston Manufacturing Company at Waltham. The water-power of that place was, however, very small, and after Mr. Lowell's death, in 1817, Mr. Jackson turned his attention to the falls of the Merrimack River at Chelmsford. There he developed manufacturing on a much larger scale, and named the new town after his former associate.

Francis C. Lowell the elder left three sons. John, the oldest of these, called John Lowell, Jr., to distinguish him from an uncle of the same name, was a merchant. While still a young man, he lost in rapid succession his wife and both his children; and his ties with home being broken, he determined to gratify an intense longing for travel by making an extended journey through the East, then comparatively little known. With this object he sailed for Europe, and travelled through the Levant and Egypt, collecting materials for the journal which he intended to publish; but the exposure resulting from a shipwreck in the Red Sea brought on an attack of dysentery, and he reached India only to die at Bombay. Believing, as he stated in his will, that, with its small natural resources, the prosperity of New England must depend on the education of its people, Mr. Lowell left half his property for

the support of public lectures in Boston, a trust which has been administered ever since under the title of the Lowell Institute.

The youngest of the three brothers, Edward Jackson Lowell, from whom our late associate was named, graduated from Harvard College in 1822, and received a degree from the Law School three years later. His career at the Bar was promising, but was cut short by his death in 1830. He developed, early in life, strong literary and historical tastes; and it is said that before he came of age his guardians feeling obliged to remonstrate with him on account of his extravagance, found to their surprise that the money was being spent for books. He accumulated, in fact, before his death a library that was considerable for those days.

Francis C. Lowell, the second of the three brothers, and the father of the subject of this memoir, graduated from Harvard College in 1821. As a young man he was exceedingly delicate, and was hardly expected to live; but a strict regimen, coupled with an extraordinary self-control and an indomitable force of will, enabled him not only to preserve his life until his seventy-second year, but also to accomplish far more than the usual amount of work. He was at one time the Actuary of the Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Company, and throughout his life was actively engaged in business, attending his office regularly until within a week of his death. Except for the regular life he was obliged to lead, he never allowed himself to become an invalid, or suffered his health to interfere with his various interests, public and private, or his duties to his friends and to the world.

Edward J. Lowell was the youngest of five children. In August, 1854, when he was less than nine years old, his mother died, and in accordance with her wish that he should receive a part of his education in Europe, his father took him abroad in the following winter. Mr. Francis C. Lowell had been away only a few months when he was called home by the condition of his business affairs; but before his return he placed his son in Sillig's school at Bellerive near Vevey on the Lake of Geneva, then at the height of its reputation. Here our late associate spent three years at the time of life when the mind is most impressionable, and he acquired a sympathy with French ideas, a comprehension of French modes of

thought, that were of incalculable value to him in his historical work. This great advantage was won without any corresponding loss, for it did not prevent his being thoroughly American, or affect the intensity of his patriotism.

After leaving Sillig's school, Mr. Lowell travelled with his father in Italy, visiting Rome and Naples. He then came home and went to one of the leading schools in Boston to prepare for college; but like many men at the present day, he felt in after life profoundly dissatisfied with this part of his education. He became convinced that the training he then received had been an injury rather than a benefit to him. In the short account of his life written for the class records at the time of his graduation from college, he says: "Here I was stuffed with as much Latin grammar as was consistent with teaching me very little Latin, and during four years learned about as little as was possible for a boy of that age." Nor did the strength of his feeling on the subject diminish as he grew older; and this opinion held by a man of natural literary taste, whose interest in all questions of education was always deep and active, is the strongest possible criticism on the system of teaching in vogue at that time.

As a boy Mr. Lowell was decidedly delicate, and during his last year at school suffered so much from weak eyes that he was obliged to study with a reader. Fortunately this trouble proved to be temporary, and never came back with anything like the same intensity; but although he became gradually better in general health, he was for many years far from robust. In spite of the weakness of his eyesight, and the necessity of making his final preparations for the examinations with the help of a reader, he entered Harvard College, as he had originally intended, in 1863. While there he wrote a good deal of poetry, and acquired no little reputation among his classmates for skill in versification, as is proved by the fact that he was poet of the Institute of 1770, and of the Hasty Pudding Club, and was the Class Odist on Commencement Day. He also wrote a number of poems for the college paper, some of which were afterwards published among the "Verses from the Harvard Advocate." It is somewhat curious that after he left college he wrote very little verse, and never printed a line; and this is the more strange because the love of poetry was a passion with him throughout his life. He knew a great deal

of poetry by heart, and was constantly in the habit of repeating it to himself when alone.

Mr. Lowell graduated in 1867, and spent the summer and autumn of that year in Europe. On January 4, 1868, — shortly after his return, — he married Mary, daughter of Mr. Samuel G. Goodrich, whose school histories, published under the *nom de plume* of Peter Parley, have had a wide celebrity. In 1868 Mr. Lowell, by his father's advice, went into business with Messrs. Hills, Turner & Harmon, importers of foreign glass; but he was not fitted by temperament for the life of a merchant, and the chief pleasure he found in the occupation resulted from the necessity of visiting Belgium, a country of which he was very fond. He soon became convinced that his career had not been well chosen, and in 1870 he decided to give up the glass business and practise law. With this view he studied a year at the Harvard Law School, and spent another year in the office of Messrs. Ropes & Gray. In June, 1872, he was admitted to the Bar, and then opened an office on Pemberton Square in connection with Mr. Brooks Adams. But this experience also was not destined to be of any long duration, for Mr. Lowell did not feel the *gaudium certaminis* that makes arguing in court an occupation so intensely attractive to many men as to overcome all difficulties, and after two years of practice he met with an obstacle that was to him insuperable. In the spring of 1874 he was left a widower with three small children; and the strong sense of his duty towards those about him, that was always a characteristic of his nature, made it impossible for him to pursue his profession and at the same time give to his children the personal care he thought necessary. He therefore abandoned the law in the autumn of 1874, and devoted himself to his children and to study.

On June 19, 1877, Mr. Lowell was married to Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. George Jones, one of the founders, and for many years the manager, of the "New York Times." He did not, however, attempt to resume the practice of the law, and indeed he had at this time no definite plans for the future. Although always a student of history, he had as yet formed no intention of making himself a historian; but it was not long before he became engaged in serious historical research.

In the summer of 1879 he went to Europe to give his

children the benefit of an early and thorough training in the German and French languages; an advantage of which his own experience had taught him the value. For this purpose he passed two winters in Dresden and two in Paris, spending the summers mainly at Homburg and in Switzerland, and making journeys to Italy and Spain. During his stay in Germany he began the historical writing that was destined to be his chief public work in life. He became interested in the history of the mercenary troops employed by England in the Revolutionary War, and took advantage of his sojourn in Germany to collect documents in the archives of the smaller States, the most important of these being the manuscripts at Arolsen in the Principality of Waldeck, and at Cassel and Marburg in the territory formerly belonging to the Elector of Hesse. He gave a brief description of the material to be found in those places in a paper on "The German Manuscript Sources for the History of the Revolutionary War" communicated to this Society several years later. (Proceedings, 2d series, vol. iii. p. 219.) The results of his researches were published first in the winter of 1880-81 in the form of a series of letters to the "New York Times," and afterwards more fully in a volume entitled "The Hessians and Other German Auxiliaries of Great Britain in the Revolutionary War," which appeared early in 1884, after his return to America. This book won for him at once a high place among students of our Revolutionary period, and shortly after it was published he was elected a member of this Society.

Mr. Lowell was now definitely engaged in a pursuit that was thoroughly congenial to him, and he devoted himself to it with the determination to make it his life's work. His winters were spent in Boston, and, except for four years when he went to the Adirondacks on account of hay fever, his summers were passed at Cotuit, on the southern side of Cape Cod. So long as his father was alive, he was in the habit of living in summer at the family place at Waltham; but after his father's death in 1874 the place was sold, and Mr. Lowell bought a house at Cotuit, a spot to which he had been attached from boyhood. Here he led a quiet life, carrying on his literary work, and spending his leisure hours with his friends and among his flowers. He soon turned his attention to a broader field of historical investigation than he had

hitherto pursued. In 1888 he published an article in Mr. Winsor's "Narrative and Critical History of America," entitled "The United States of America, 1775-82: Their Political Struggles with Europe." He then proposed to write a life of Lafayette as a vehicle for a comparative study of the American and French Revolutions, and accumulated a considerable amount of material with that object; but finding that another man was already engaged in the same work, and had nearly prepared it for publication, he changed his plan and determined to examine the condition of France at the outbreak of the Revolution. This was the most extensive subject that Mr. Lowell had yet undertaken, and he approached it with a generous regard for all the various classes and parties, and a broad interest in every aspect it presented, political, philosophic, religious, social, and economic,—in short, with the true historical spirit in its highest and best sense. Mr. Lowell used to say that God made him a Whig and he could not be anything else; but as a historian he was far more than a Whig. He had, in fact, no pet theory to prove, no favorite party to justify, and hence he was able to form his judgments without prejudice. He saw the evil in the old Régime without exaggerating it, and he appreciated both the strength and the weakness in the position of its opponents. Moreover, his keen sympathy with everything human made the French under the monarchy, with their aspirations, their fears, and their prejudices, living men in his eyes, and enabled him to portray their condition in a way that is comprehensible and lifelike to a degree rarely attained by historians dealing with that period.

His book entitled "The Eve of the French Revolution" appeared in the autumn of 1892. The author's conception of the subject cannot be expressed better than in his own words taken from the preface, where he says:—

"There is, however, another way of looking at that great revolution of which we habitually set the beginning in 1789. That date is, indeed, momentous; more so than any other in modern history. It marks the outbreak in legislation and politics of ideas which had already been working for a century, and which have changed the face of the civilized world. These ideas are not all true nor all noble. They have in them a large admixture of speculative error and of spiritual baseness. They require to-day to be modified and readjusted. But

they represent sides of truth which in 1789, and still more in 1689, were too much overlooked and neglected. They suited the stage of civilization which the world had reached, and men needed to emphasize them. Their very exaggeration was perhaps necessary to enable them to fight, and in a measure to supplant, the older doctrines which were in possession of the human mind."

The book is devoted to the consideration of these ideas and of the condition of France at the time they began to influence her destiny. In order to lay a solid foundation for his work, the author made a careful study of the theories of political writers from Aristotle and Plato to Montesquieu and Rousseau; and although only a small part of this study appears directly in his book, it gives breadth and color to the whole. In regard to the state of the country, Mr. Lowell belonged distinctly to the modern school which attributes the Revolution not to the peculiar wretchedness of the French people, but to the fact that they had become sufficiently prosperous and well educated to see the evils in their government and crave a better one. In his concluding chapter he remarks: —

"The condition of the people of France, both in Paris and in the provinces, was far less bad than it is often represented to have been. The foregoing chapters should have given the impression of a great, prosperous, modern country. The face of Europe has changed since 1789 more through the enormous number and variety of mechanical inventions that have marked the nineteenth century than through a corresponding increase in mental or moral growth. . . . But while France was great, prosperous, and growing, and a model to her neighbors, she was deeply discontented. The condition of other countries was less good than hers, but the minds of the people of those countries had not risen above their condition. France had become conscious that her government did not correspond to her degree of civilization."

In the winter of 1893 Mr. Lowell again went to Europe. He sailed for the Mediterranean with his wife and daughter, landed at Genoa, and after spending two or three weeks in Rome and Naples, pushed on to Greece. The fact that for several years he had been the treasurer of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, gave him unusual opportunities, and with his strong natural love for art he enjoyed his travels in Greece exceedingly. After leaving that country he passed a month in Rome, and then journeyed by Perugia

to Florence, intending to spend some time in the North of Italy; but he was called back to America by illness in his family. He had not been at home many months before he began to feel unwell. At first he seemed merely tired, and throughout the winter of 1894 there appeared to be no serious cause for anxiety; but in April his condition suddenly became alarming, and on May 11 he died at Cotuit of a tumor on the brain. At no time had life appeared to offer to him a brighter prospect; at no time was his usefulness to the world so great as when he died. His scholarship was ripe. His activity and capacity for work had been increasing year by year. The wisdom, which he had a happy faculty of embodying in aphorisms, even more perhaps in conversation than in writing, was deep and strong. At the time of his death he had planned a book on the influence of the French Revolution in other countries, but had only begun to work upon it when his strength failed.

At the meetings of this Society Mr. Lowell was a constant attendant, and during the earlier part of his membership he made communications relating to the history of the Hessian mercenaries (Proceedings, 2d series, vol. iii. p. 219, and vol. iv. p. 2). In later years his studies were in a field farther removed from the subjects commonly discussed here, and he did not often speak, but he never failed to take an active part in the work of the Society. He served on the Council, and on a number of committees, of which the most important was that on the Pickering papers, under whose care was prepared the valuable index of those manuscripts now going through the press. Mr. Lowell was also a member of the American Historical Association, the New York Historical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts. During the last nine years of his life he gave a great deal of time to the Boston Athenæum, where his varied interests in history, literature, and art made his services as a trustee peculiarly valuable. Apart from the historical works already mentioned, his writings consisted for the most part of magazine articles, editorials, and reviews of books; the most notable of the former being his essays on the Bayeux Tapestry, on the Life of Benvenuto Cellini, and on Clothes Historically Considered, published in Scribner's Magazine (March, 1887, Octo-

ber, 1889, and September, 1893), and an "Essay on Liberal Education" which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* (January, 1888). The last thing he wrote was for Lord Tennyson for the American Academy of Sciences.

In speaking of his writings one feels that a small part of his life has been touched. His quick instincts, and his quick and comprehensive comprehension of the other side of his life peculiarly rich in its literary work may be described and his personal character cannot be measured. His affection for his family, the courtesy and kindness to every one with whom he came into contact, and above all, the conscientiousness, simple, quiet, unostentatious, lenient towards himself, will never be forgotten by those who knew him.





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